

KEY POINTS – LESSON 29



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Note: The handout is based on the explanation of Inner dimensions of zakah from Mukhtasar Minhaj ul Qasideen of Imam Ibn Qudamah R.A.

INNER DIMENSIONS OF CHARITY

Zakah (obligatory charity) is one of the pillars of Islam and almost everywhere in the Quran, Allah swt has mentioned it with another fundamental pillar of Islam – Salah. The books of fiqh provide a detailed explanation of the important topic of zakah.

Three types of people who give charity

There are three types of people who give:

- There is the first group who do not save anything for themselves and give all of what they have for the sake of Allah swt. Our Prophet ﷺ even use to take loans from others in order to fulfill someone's need. Once Abu Huraira R.A. was very hungry and he came to the Prophet. All the Prophet ﷺ he had in his house was a bowl of milk. He asked him to come along with his other fellows from Ashab us Suffah, the poor companions who used to reside in the mosque of the Prophet ﷺ and use to engage in learning the deen. The Prophet ﷺ made Abu Huraira R.A. sit on his left and he asked people from the right to drink. Abu Huraira R.A. thought that when the bowl would reach him, it would not have anything. However, contrary to what he was thinking, when the bowl reached him, it was as full as before due to the barakah of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ asked him to drink from it. He kept drinking till he got full and did not have any further need. This is not just a description of the miracle of the Prophet ﷺ and his barakah, but also a description of how he used to give all his possessions in the way of Allah swt.
- The second group of people is those who spend on a few things and save a few things. Many of the companions used to fall into this category. The companions were the people who did not consider the zakat to be merely 2.5%. They believed that if someone is in need, it is their utmost duty to give and they used to do so from the possessions and things that they loved.



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- The third type of people who give are those who stick to the minimum mandatory requirements. This also can save us if done with a sincere heart. However, if we add more to it, insha'Allah, it will increase our light on the day of judgment.

May Allah make us from those who not only regularly give their minimum due zakah, but also top it up with as much as they can.

Ethics of Zakah

Certain inward altitudes and duties are incumbent on those who seek, through paying Zakah, the way that leads to the Hereafter as follows:

Fix a timeframe for Zakah

Though there is no prescribed time of the year in Shariah which one should fix for giving the zakah. However, it is explained by the scholars that having a fixed time and significantly help with the regularity as well as with the calculations. In certain times of years when one is spiritually uplifted, such as Ramadan or Muharram or first 10 days of Dhul Hajjah, it can be a more suitable opportunity to pay zakat in them every year.

Giving Zakah in secret:

Secrecy in paying Zakah is farthest removed from hypocritical display and reputation seeking. Giving Zakah openly may harm the poor when he feels humility. One of the scholars said that there are three things from the treasures of the righteous. One of them is giving charity in secret. On the day of judgment when there will be no shade, one of the persons who would be provided shade by Allah swt, as the beloved Messenger ﷺ explained to us, will be the person who used to give charity so secretly that his one hand did not know while the other was giving charity.

Understanding the significance and objectives of Zakah:

Objectives of Zakah test the degree of love for Allah, elimination of miserliness and showing gratitude. Both of these fruits result in the softness of heart.

Avoiding taunting and hurting peoples' feelings:

One should not invalidate his Zakah by taunting and hurting peoples' feelings. Whatever that may be, there is no problem between the donor and the poor recipient until the former comes to see himself as a benefactor. One should, moreover, realize that giving Zakah is actually paying Allah swt what is due while the poor man is actually receiving His sustenance from Allah, to Whom it has first passed,



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Showing humbleness:

This signifies the importance of thinking little of one's donation; if one considers it big and great, it is as if he is inviting that self-righteous pride which is one of the deadly sins, rendering good deeds worthless.

Paying Zakah from what is good and lawful:

According to a Hadith narrated by Muslim, Allah, Most High, is Good and does not accept but that which is good. Zakah should be given from the best of one's wealth. In this context, Allah, The Most High, says:

‘O ye who believe! Give of the good things which you have {honourably} earned, and of the fruits of the earth which we have produced for you, and do not even aim at getting anything which is bad, in order that out of it ye may give away something.’ (Al-Baqarah: 267)

‘By no means shall ye attain righteousness unless you give (freely) of that which ye love, and whatever you give of a truth Allah knows it well.’ (A’ Imran: 92)

Giving Zakah to those who are most worthy and deserving:

One should seek out a truly worthy recipient for his Zakah, rather than be content with just anybody who happens who fall within the eight categories of legally qualified beneficiaries. For among those generally eligible persons, there are some with special qualities. Consideration should be given to the following six qualities:

- First: One should seek out those righteous people who have renounced the world and devoted themselves solely to the Hereafter. The reason for this is that your charity will help the righteous person bolster his piety; by helping him you will have a share in his worship.
- Second, the recipient should be chosen from amongst the people of learning, in order to support him in his quest for knowledge.
- Thirds the recipient should be sincere in his faith and should have a profound devotion to Allah alone. This singleness of worship and devotion (Tawhid) is apparent when, on accepting a gift, he offers praise and thanks to Allah, Most High, regarding Him as the source of the blessings rather than any intermediary. Such a man is truly grateful to Allah, Most High, recognizing that all blessings flow from Him.
- Fourth, the recipient should be a person who has remained anonymous and kept his need to himself, not being given to fuss and complaint. In this connection, Allah, Most High, says: ‘Charity is for those needy people who are engaged so much in the cause of Allah that they cannot move about in the land to earn their livelihood: the ignorant think that they are wealthy on account of their modest behavior. You can recognize them by their look because they do not make insistent demands on people. Whatever you spend on them, surely Allah knows it.’ (Al-Baqarah: 273) Such people should be sought out by a thorough investigation of the religious people in each neighborhood, and by looking deeply into the instances of good



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and decent people since the reward for addressing charity to them is many times greater than for spending on those who are vociferous in their begging.

- Fifth: The recipient should be someone saddled with a large family, or else disabled by illness or some other cause.
- Sixth: The recipient should be a close relative, whether paternal or maternal. The offering will then serve the additional purpose of strengthening ties of kinship, the reward for which is incalculable.

Now, we should keep in mind the fact that if anyone can be found in whom all these qualities are combined, that is the greatest treasure and the supreme prize. If one fails to find such a man, then the person in whom five qualities are combined is better than the person in whom four qualities are found, and so on.

Qualities of the Recipient

The recipient of Zakah should be one of the eight categories of legally qualified beneficiaries. He, moreover, should be characterized by the following four qualities:

- 1- He should understand that Zakah is levied upon the well-to-do Muslims in order to meet his needs, and so he should concern himself with seeking the pleasure of Allah alone.
- 2- He should thank the giver of Zakah and call upon Allah on his behalf. In a Hadith narrated by Abu Dawud, it is confirmed that one who does not thank people does not thank Allah, Most High. Yet, this form of voicing gratitude should not exceed the limit of thanking an intermediary whom Allah, Most High, decrees to give that charity, while Allah remains the source of all bounties. This quality necessitates that a recipient should not think little of the gift. Furthermore, a recipient of Zakah should cover the faults of the gift.
- 3- He should accept only what is lawful.
- 4- He should take only what meets his needs.

Virtues and Ethics of Optional Charity

Virtues of optional charity are numerous. Below are some of them:

The inclination of miserliness is broken by developing the habit of giving. The habit of miserliness causes a lot of anxiety in our hearts. The giving in the way of Allah will open our heart and we feel joyful when we spend on the right causes.

The act of giving removes the curtains of materialism that block our vision. We realize the importance of real things in our life. We see the reality of things. We come to know that feelings are more important than the filled bank-accounts. We feel the love when we do something for Allah swt. That feeling, as those who have tasted it know very well, is one of the most soothing feeling in this world.



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The zakah gives purity to our wealth and our hearts. The amount of purity we receive depends on the purity of our intention in giving zakah.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Who among you considers the wealth of his heirs dearer to him than his own wealth? They (the Companions of the Prophet) replied "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, There is none among us but loves his own wealth more." The Prophet ﷺ said, "So his wealth is whatever he spends (in Allah's Cause) during his life (on good deeds) while the wealth of his heirs is whatever he leaves after his death ." (Reported by Al- Bukhari)

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reports that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: If somebody gives out in charity something equal to a date from his lawfully gained money - for nothing ascends to Allah except that which is good - then Allah will take it with his Right (Hand) and bring it up for its owner as anyone of you brings up a baby horse ; until it becomes like a mountain. " (Reported by Al-Bukhari)

Another Hadith states, "Give out charity for it guarantees your salvation from the Hell-fire." (Reported by At-Tabarani)

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

"Charity does not in any way decrease one's wealth; ' the servant who forgives y Allah adds to his respect, and the one who shows humility t Allah elevates him in the estimation (of the people)."

(Reported by Muslim)

The Mother of the Believers, ' Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) narrated that once they slaughtered a sheep when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked her, "What is remained of it (after giving charity)?" She replied, "Nothing has remained except its shoulder." Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "All of it has remained except its shoulder (meaning that what is given in charity will remain for them in the Hereafter)." (Reported by At- Tirmidhi)

As to the ethics of optional charity, they are the same as the ethics of obligatory Zakah.

Muslim scholars, however, have differed on deciding which is better for the poor to take from Zakah or from optional charity: A group of scholars has preferred to die former while others have given precedence to the latter.

As to the best charity, it is explained in the Hadith narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that a man asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), "O Messenger of Allah! What kind of charity is the best?" He replied: "To give in charity while you are healthy and greedy hoping to be wealthy and afraid of becoming poor. Don't delay giving in charity until that time you will be on the deathbed when you say r ' Give so much to so-and-so and



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so much to so-and-so,' and at that time the property is not yours but it belongs to so-and-so (i. e. , your inheritors).” (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

CONTEMPLATION TASK FOR LESSON 30

Which of the three categories of types of people who give charity do you fall into? How can you increase the giving? Feel the pain of those who are suffering all around us? Can you give something for the sake of Allah today and make a dua to make it a source of cleansing for your self? May Allah accept it from us all.